

GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL ON THE ENVIRONMENT AT THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The management of our environment has assumed critical and strategic importance in today's world, given the accelerating pace of change, the power of technology, the scope of scientific inquiry, the direction of demography, and the competition for natural resources. Confronting today's environmental challenge is crucial to improving the quality of life in New Jersey and, indeed, the nation and the world.

The Governor's School on the Environment is designed to bring together a diverse group of talented high school rising seniors from throughout the state for an intensive learning experience designed to explore the relationship of human beings to their environment and the impact of humans and the environment on each other. Students will be challenged to discover and evaluate competing interests affecting critical environmental issues of our day and to seek their personal roles in creating positive environmental change. The program is **not** limited to students whose academic interests and strengths are in the sciences. The program will explore aspects of the social, economic, and political environment as well as the natural environment. Therefore, students are encouraged to apply who have interests in any of these areas.

Goals of the Program

The Governor's School learning experience is intended:

1. to increase students' practical knowledge of our natural environment and its scientific study so as to bolster their confidence, capacity, and interest in taking ownership of the fragile ecosystems that sustain all life;
2. to enhance students' awareness of participatory public responsibility for the quality of life through intensive collegial participation in public concerns related to the environment;
3. to encourage students to aspire to community leadership.
4. to provide students with direct exposure to local natural ecosystems through hikes, kayak & canoe trips and overnight primitive camping experiences.

To accomplish these goals the Governor's School will offer to students an array of "hands-on" activities within a collaborative setting. These include:

- inquiry into classic and contemporary thought about the relationship of humanity and nature in space and time;
- application of state-of-the-art scientific and technological information to contemporary and pending environmental concerns;
- examination of the competing claims of economic development interests and environmentalists about public policy questions;
- field experiences in environmental concerns such as land use planning, preserving bio-diversity, energy conservation and resource management;
- student research which integrates ecological concerns, private action, public health, community organizing, and public decision-making with scientific knowledge.

Program Structure

The Governor's School program is structured around the intensive course, the integrative seminar, field experience and the evening and afternoon programs:

1. Daily intensive courses focus on areas such as Pinelands ecology and policy, environmental protection and economic development, geographic information systems, community design, pollution and public health, the quality of urban life, air and water pollution, marine science, biodiversity, alternate energy sources, environmental ethics, and global environmental issues. Each course approaches its topic in the context of New Jersey while considering local, national, and global dimensions also. Students concentrate on one course and develop individual or group research plans within the context of their course. The highlight of the intensive course is a scientific conference on the last Saturday of the program where each class highlights critical aspects of their accomplishments during their study. Frequent field trips provide the student with abundant first-hand experiences in multiple habitats as well as research opportunities. **In addition to other physically demanding activities, scholars should be prepared for the rigors of hiking, backpacking, and/or canoeing, for extended periods in the Pine Barrens as well as overnight primitive camping.**

2. The integrative seminar is centered around and builds upon the Pinelands Ecosystem Project. This Project is a collaborative field/lab experience designed to introduce students to the scientific study of the Pine Barrens. Under the direction of Governor's School and Stockton faculty, students gather data on the vegetation, hydrology, soil, biodiversity, and other aspects of the campus. This data is stored from year to year. Students in the integrative seminar draw on the perspectives and information from the field experience to analyze this data, as well as upon GS and Stockton faculty and other resources as needed. The object of the seminar is to develop an environmental impact statement (and alternate suggestions) for a proposed hypothetical development plan in this highly protected ecosystem. Each group will present its analysis and alternate plan in poster sessions.

3. The evening and afternoon programs further enriches the learning environment with debates, lectures, simulations, and workshops on a range of personal, state, and global environmental issues.

The College Environment

An informal atmosphere of community life involves students, residence assistants, and (some) faculty living full time on campus, working and learning together. Opportunities for sports, recreation and social events are scheduled regularly.

Experienced, sensitive residence assistants supervise dorm life and attend to the personal needs of each participant. Experienced college and high school faculty teach courses and workshops and lead seminars. The faculty has been chosen on the basis of their love of teaching, their proven accomplishments, sensitivity to young people, and their respect for nature. The learning atmosphere emphasizes freedom from routine academic structures and it stresses the connections between the cognitive, creative, and ethical dimensions of learning.

For Further Information

Please Contact:

The Governor's School on the Environment The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
P.O. Box 195 Pomona, New Jersey 08240 Phone: (609) 652-4924

Governor's School on the Environment web page: www.stockton.edu/govschool

To visit the Governor's School Organization web page: www.nj.gov/govschool

SELECTION CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES
GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL ON THE ENVIRONMENT
AT RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

TO THE APPLICANT: Please provide those writing letters of recommendation for you with a copy of this page as well as the "Characteristics of Talented Students" page and the "Governor's School on the Environment Program Description."

TO RECOMMENDER AND NOMINATING COMMITTEES: We appreciate your assistance in helping us form a Governor's School student body of New Jersey's most talented students that will also represent the ethnic and racial diversity of the State. The Governor's School encourages all qualified applicants regardless of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, political activity, or private conduct. We also want the student body to represent the State geographically. We want to bring students of all talents into greater familiarity with the natural and social environmental issues of their state and world.

SELECTION CRITERIA: In order to help you identify students who will most benefit by this program, we suggest the following overall criteria:

FIRST, the student must be interested in the general nature of the school. The student should expect to be immersed in an intensive and enriching program on social and natural environmental issues. While the student may not have much existing knowledge about environmental issues, we will expect her or him to strongly desire acquiring such knowledge.

SECOND, the student must be willing to attend the full session. Saturdays and Sundays make up part of the program, hence there will be no weekend leaves of absence. There are visitation hours on Sundays.

THIRD, the student must have at least a B average in academic course grades (excluding gym, art, and shop courses) and must rank at least in the 90th percentile on any achievement or aptitude tests he or she has taken. (If the junior class at your high school lacks students who have scored in the 90th percentile, students with lower percentile scores may apply as long as they are among the highest scores in your school.) Often the most creative students do not devote their gifts to getting A grades. Instead they divide their energies between school and other activities, and hence do not have all their potential invested in academic achievements. The students, however, must be intellectually able to participate in a rigorous academic environment.

FOURTH, there are many definitions of giftedness and ways of expressing them. We have attached a list of some aspects of talent which are commonly thought to be important and are likely to be found in most academically talented and motivated persons.

Our ideal student would demonstrate many of these traits and be very interested in getting to know other scholars and collaborating with them.

OTHER SELECTION GUIDELINES
NOMINEES WILL BE EVALUATED BY THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Is the application complete?
- Does the student's application demonstrate interest in the environment, leadership potential, and a drive to achieve?
- Does the student's writing sample demonstrate good writing skills and creativity? Has the student taken a risk to write other than what he or she thinks the selection committees want to hear?
- Does the student's writing sample illustrate the student's interest in the unique nature of the school?
- Does this student seem willing to learn and does the student believe in him or herself, yet is humble?
- Do the student's extracurricular involvements reflect a range and depth of interests, leadership potential, and/or community involvements?
- Do the letters of recommendation and the high school nomination committee's letter of support demonstrate why this student is atypical and uniquely suited for the school?
- Does this student exhibit many of the traits of talented students?

SUGGESTIONS FOR RECOMMENDERS

CHARACTERISTICS OF TALENTED STUDENTS WHO MAY BENEFIT FROM THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL

Applicant: Provide those writing letters of recommendation with a copy of this page, as well as the description of the Governor's School on the Environment.

Dear Recommender:

We appreciate your help to the selection committees so they may get to know this applicant better. We rely on you to tell us what this student is like as a learner and collaborator. Be as frank as you can and please give us some examples that will help bring your comments to life. We would particularly like you to consider their 1) environmental interest, 2) their leadership potential, 3) their drive to achieve and 4) the following characteristics of talented students; in writing your letter of recommendation. We have observed that students with such characteristics have been able to take great advantage of the learning experience at the Governor's School on the Environment.

Generally speaking, the talented student who benefits from this program:

1. possesses curiosity, is a keen observer, thrives on complexity, gets involved;
2. shows strong intellectual ability in functions such as abstracting, conceptualizing, and reasoning;
3. sees new relationships, is able to generate many alternatives;
4. develops ideas that are original and uncommon, yet adaptive to the requirements of a particular problem or task;
5. is tolerant of ambiguity;
6. teams rapidly, easily and efficiently; retains and uses information;
7. can learn quickly and in sizeable chunks, both in formal and experiential situations;
8. is fluent in written or verbal expression or in the arts (this is often characterized by advanced vocabulary and abstract reasoning);
9. has a sense of humor;
10. is inquisitive, asks provocative questions, has unusual ability to evaluate and criticize ideas;
11. is very likely to have the courage to support his or her convictions in spite of open criticism, and may dissent from authority at times;
12. is perceptually open to subtle cues in his or her environment;
13. is sensitive to others and adaptive to new situations;
14. demonstrates leadership ability in his or her peer group; has an ability to organize people and tasks, and to motivate others;
15. has a pronounced ability to concentrate for long periods of time and is a producer;
16. derives considerable pleasure from intellectual and artistic attainments;
17. shows a university of interests;
18. enjoys the freedom to learn and create according to his or her own style;
19. is very likely to have strong moral and social concerns; and
20. enjoys the outdoors and observing natural environments.

Application: Governor's School on the Environment

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
Cover Sheet (Page One of Application)

Please Print or Type:

Name of Student: _____
(Last) (First) (Middle Initial) (Nickname if any)

Home Street Address: _____

City or Town: _____ County: _____ Zip: _____

Student Email: _____ Parent Email: _____

Telephone () _____ Birthdate: _____ Male: _____ Female: _____

Race and/or National Origin (optional) _____

State Legislative District #: _____

School Name : _____ Public _____ Parochial _____ Private _____

School Street Address: _____

School City or Town _____ Zip: _____ School County _____

School Phone () _____ Principal: _____

Name of Father or Guardian _____ Name of Mother or Guardian _____

FOR STUDENT AND PARENT

I am a resident of the State of New Jersey.

I will be a senior in the 2009 – 2010 school year.

I am willing and able to attend the entire session.

**This is to certify that I give permission for
My son/daughter to attend the Governor's
School of New Jersey.**

**I understand that the program includes
extensive field experiences including
camping, hiking, and boating field
investigations.**

(signature of student)

(signature of parent or guardian)

Dates to Remember:

Nov. 21, 2008 – Submission of complete applications and materials for nominees to County Superintendents' Offices – Original + one copy.

Dec. 12, 2008 – Submission of materials from County Offices to Governor's School on the Environment at Richard Stockton College.

April 3, 2009 - Application status letters mailed to all nominees with email notification.

GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

APPLICATION CHECKLIST
THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL ON THE ENVIRONMENT AT
THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
(second sheet of application)

Please Print or Type:

Applicant's Name: _____
(Last) (First) (Middle Initial)

School: _____ School Telephone: () _____

CHECKLIST TO BE REVIEWED BY PRINCIPAL AND STUDENT

(Missing components may result in the application being declared incomplete with no further consideration being granted to the applicant.)

Principal
check here:

Student
check here:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| _____ 1. On a separate sheet the student has listed extracurricular activities, leadership notes, and/or community activities of the last two years, listed in order of importance or extent of involvement, and a paragraph which describes his or her most meaningful involvement. | 1. _____ |
| _____ 2. The student has included an essay (300-500 words) clarifying his or her interest in attending a Governor's School that focuses on natural and social environmental issues. | 2. _____ |
| _____ 3. The student has included a brief autobiographical sketch (250-300 words), including, for example, personal background and aspirations. The Governor's School on the Environment aims toward a student body that reflects the rich ethnic/cultural diversity of the State. | 3. _____ |
| _____ 4. The student has included two letters of recommendation from individuals not related to the student. The student provided these two people with the selection criteria and guidelines as well as the suggestions for recommenders. | 4. _____ |
| _____ 5. The student has kept a copy of the application for their records. | 5. _____ |

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(FOR PRINCIPAL USE ONLY)

Principal check here:

- _____ 1. The high school nomination committee has included a statement explaining why it has nominated this student stressing why he or she is atypical and why he or she will make an excellent Governor's Scholar.
- _____ 2. The candidate is a conscientious student with at least a B average in academic course grades.
- _____ 3. A transcript of the student's academic course grades is included. Transcripts should include current eleventh year grades. (Please do not send description of school and grading policy.)
Fill in high school GPA: _____ Class Rank: _____ Class Size: _____
- _____ 4. The candidate ranks in the top 10% of students in the junior class at this school on recent achievement tests he or she has taken.
- _____ 5. Record below, results of the student's achievements and/or PSAT/SAT scores. (See program Selection Criteria and Guidelines for specific requirements).
- PSAT/SAT score: _____ Date _____ Achievement score(s): _____ Date _____
- _____ 6. School District Name _____

Principal's Signature

Student's Signature